INSIDE
IMAGE
MARCH 1993
ISSUE #1
Liefeld! Lee!
Youngblood: Strike File

INSIDE MARCH

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Front Cover Illustration: Youngblood: Strike File by Rob Liefeld

Back Cover Illustration: Spawn by Todd McFarlane

IMAGE ON THE MOVE

IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T HEARD THE NEWS already, Image Comics is on the move again...*literally*. Over the last couple months, we've been in the process of expanding our role in the comics marketplace by taking a more active hand in the production of our titles and, as of this month, Image Comics will be taking over the position of publisher from Malibu Comics Entertainment.

WHILE THIS NEWS MAY COME AS A BIT OF A SURPRISE to some, the move from Malibu is actually a natural progression in the growth of Image Comics. When Image was formed last year, Malibu was brought on board to assist in the distribution and marketing of the Image line. Malibu played an important part in helping Image get things rolling and no one appreciates the excellent job they did in promoting and soliciting our material more than we here at Image. Things change, however, and over the past year, both Image and Malibu have enjoyed tremendous growth and success. Image is now ready to assume control of its own destiny and we wish Malibu continued success in all their future endeavors.

ONE RESULT OF THIS "CHANGING OF THE GUARD," is that *Inside Image* will now be coming at you each and every month with all the latest news regarding Image Comics and the creators who produce them. We've got a lot of exciting things planned for 1993 and you'll be getting the full story on each project right here in *Inside Image*. And, in addition to giving you the scoop on all our upcoming titles, special projects and promotions, we'll also keep you up to date on the people behind these projects. Besides being your number one source of information on Image Comics, it should be a lot of fun, too, so make sure you stick around.

FINALLY, EVERYONE AT IMAGE WILL TELL YOU that moving away from Malibu is a big step. It's a bold move in a dramatic new direction and, as with all such changes, it's understandable that this shift in the *status quo* may be met with varying degrees of skepticism. However, anyone entertaining the notion that Image Comics is going to falter during this transitional second year is wildly mistaken and the next few issues of *Inside Image* will serve to bear this message out. Maybe it's clichéd to say the

best is yet to come, but in this case, it couldn't be nearer the truth. The bottom line is, if you thought Image's first year was something, then Image:Year Two is going to blow you away.

JAE LEE:

WHY DON'T YOU GIVE US A LITTLE BACKGROUND ON THE CHAPEL STORY YOU AND ROB ARE DOING IN *YOUNGBLOOD:STRIKE FILE*.

Basically, what we've got is a two part story dealing with some loose ends from Chapel's past. Rob establishes here that prior to Chapel's involvement with Youngblood, he was working as a gun for hire. As it turns out, his primary employer was a character we've seen in a few flashback sequences in *Spawn* named Jason Wynn. In fact, one of Chapel's most trusted partners is Al Simmons, the man who eventually becomes Spawn and it's Chapel's and Simmons' relationship with this Wynn character that gives us our story, because, in case you haven't noticed this already in *Spawn*, Jason Wynn is not what you'd call a nice guy.

IN OTHER WORDS, HE'S GOT IT IN FOR CHAPEL AND AL SIMMONS?

More or less, yeah. And he's not alone. We're also going to be introducing a new character of Rob's in this story called Giger. He's the leader of a large, cyborg terrorist operation called Cybernet and he's going to be the source of a lot of trouble for Youngblood in the future. I can't really tell you too much about how he relates to this story other than the fact that he plays a major role in both Chapel's past and his present.

SO THIS STORY TAKES PLACE IN BOTH THE PAST AND THE PRESENT?

Yeah, the first part of the story deals primarily with his past; his relationship with Al Simmons and Jason Wynn and so on. The second half of the story will deal more with the Chapel of today and the effect the events of the first story have on his life. One

YOUNGBLOOD: STRIKE FILE

INTERVIEW BY RON RIFE

very big, and very obvious, change in his life is the death of his friend and partner, Al Simmons, who dies in the period of time that elapses between the flashback stuff and the things that are happening right now. And, in case this sounds like a low-key introspective story, don't worry - Rob wrote the story, so it's definitely not left wanting for action.

YOU MENTIONED AL SIMMONS; WILL SPAWN BE APPEARING IN THE STORY?

At this point I don't think so, but things could change between now and when this things comes out. I do know that it's going to tie in with some things that should be happening in the *Spawn* series right around the time we're wrapping all of this up, though, so if there are people out there dying to see Chapel and Spawn in the same comic, I guess they're still in luck.

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO DOING A CHARACTER LIKE CHAPEL AS OPPOSED TO, SAY, SHAFT OR DIEHARD?

Well, I like drawing big guys with big guns and Chapel certainly fits into that category. The kind of mood that comes along with a character like Chapel, the dynamics of it all...I can have a lot of fun with that. And he's a fairly grim looking character, which appeals to me. People have joked about the fact that I never draw anyone smiling in my comics...maybe it's a reflection of my personality.

HOW WILL YOUR INTERPRETATION OF CHAPEL DIFFER FROM ROB'S?

I would make him more savage. Normally, it would depend on the story, but in this instance I'm going to play him as the big, brooding character who blows people away and actually look like he can do it. And, if at all possible, I want to make him look even bigger and stronger than the way Rob draws him.

BACKTRACKING A BIT, HOW DID YOU FIRST GET INVOLVED WITH YOUNGBLOOD:STRIKE FILE?

Originally, Rob had called me several months ago about the possibility of doing a pin-up for *Youngblood*. Over the course of our next several conversations, it sort of grew into this one-shot *Youngblood* project that Rob had planned. After that it evolved into a four-issue limited series and, in order to make this book different from the regular *Youngblood* title, Rob thought it would be a good idea to feature solo characters as opposed to the entire team. Rob asked me which character I'd be most interested in drawing and I said I thought I could do some interesting things with Chapel. And that's how this whole thing got started!

WHAT'S IT LIKE WORKING WITH ROB?

Well, I don't' work with him *per se*, but from the conversations we've had, he seems like an incredibly nice guy. He's definitely one of the most enthusiastic people I've ever spoken with. We're both in the same age bracket, so we have something in common in that sense. It's sort of funny, because I met him at a convention maybe three years ago and he commented on the fact that I drew like John Byrne, which I did at that time. Not much longer after that, I ended up taking over the penciling on the Beast story Rob was doing in *Marvel Comics Presents* and now I'm working with him on *Youngblood*, so it's kind of weird how this all worked out.

LOOKING PAST THE THINGS YOU'RE DOING ON STRIKE FILE, ARE YOU GOING TO BE DOING ANY OTHER PROJECTS FOR IMAGE?

Actually, I'm going to be drawing *Wild C.A.T.S #0* after I finish doing *Youngblood:Strike File*. That ought to be a lot of fun. After that, we'll have to wait and see. Hopefully, I'll be coming out with something else soon after that. Obviously, one of the most appealing things about Image is the fact that you get to write and draw your own characters and develop them in whichever way you see fit. I'd love to take advantage of that.

YOUNGBLOOD: STRIKE FILE #1

$2.50
Color. (of 4)
Rob Liefeld/ Jae Lee

From the pages of YOUNGBLOOD! Two of the hottest names in comics today, Rob Liefeld and Jae Lee, kick off the first of this four-issue spotlight series with twin tales focusing on two of Youngblood's most popular characters, Diehard and Chapel. To start things off, Liefeld and Lee team up to explore Chapel's past in the first chapter of a two-part story that will ultimately tie in to upcoming events in both SPAWN and the up-coming YOUNGBLOOD regular series. Then, as if that wasn't enough, Diehard goes it alone against the SAVAGE DRAGON's Super-Patriot in the first of an explosive three-part story written, penciled and inked by Rob Liefeld. And, to top it all off, this issue also features dual covers by Liefeld and Lee!

THE MAXX #1

$1.95
Color.
By Sam Kieth/ William Messner-Loebs

Fresh from their debut in DARKER IMAGE, Sam Kieth and William Messner-Loebs chronicle the beginning of a storyline that will ultimately pit the Maxx against the greatest foe he's ever faced, leading up to a dramatic conclusion in the first issue of the MAXX continuing series.

DARKER IMAGE #3

$2.50
Color. (of 4)
Rob Liefeld/Jim Lee/
Sam Kieth

BLOODWULF
Color. (of 4)
Rob Liefeld

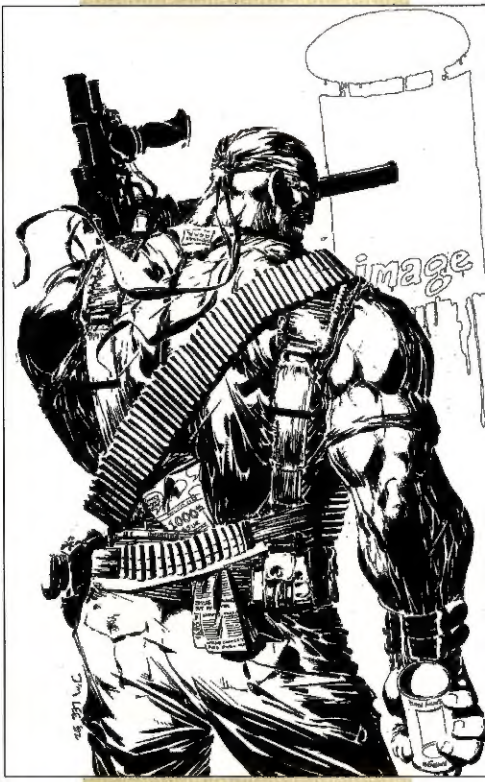
Bloodwulf journeys to the planet of pregnant men, 'nuff said!

THE MAXX
Sam Kieth/William
Messner-Loebs

This part takes place in the Australian outback of the dream time.

DEATHBLOW
Pencils/Inks/Plots: Jim Lee
Plot/Script: Brandon Choi
Colorist: Joe Chiodo

It is eve of Desert Storm. Michael Cray, a special operations assassin, goes into Baghdad with his CIA hit team. The Mission is to terminate Saddam Hussein and stop the impending conflict before it even starts. The whole operation quickly explodes in Cray's face and a cataclysmic chain of events is set into motion.



ASK IMAGE

C/O Image Comics, P.O. Box 7071
Fullerton, California 92634

Dear Image,

I'm writing to tell you how excited I am about Image Comics. I really like the variety of characters you've come up with so far: *Spawn, Youngblood, Cyber Force, the PITT* and all the others are some of the best characters to come down the pike since I started collecting comics. The characters at Marvel and DC are cool, but most of them have been around longer than I've been alive. The Image heroes just seem like they're more for my generation.

I also like the colors in your comics. They're far superior to anything I've ever seen from Marvel or DC, except maybe DC's *Legends of the Dark Knight*, which just happens to be colored by the awesome Steve Oliff! All of your colorists - Steve Oliff, Brian Murray, Joe Chioda, etc. deserve big pats on their backs for their excellent color work!

Finally, I have a few questions...
1) Will there ever any Image action figures?
2) Are there going to be Image video games?
3) Will all the Image characters cross-over in a big "Infinity War"-type battle?

Christopher Young
Riverside, CA

Thanks for the terrific letter, Chris! Everyone involved with Image works very hard to produce the best comics possible and it's always nice to hear that people like what we're doing. As far as your questions go...both a Youngblood *action figure line and an Image cross-over are currently in the works, but you'll have to wait until a little later in the year for all the details, so stick around. Finally, there's been talk about video games, but nothing concrete as of yet.*

Dear Image,

Image. Wow, there is so much cool stuff coming out of this company! I can't wait for each new issue to come out. Hopefully, you guys will start putting your comics out on a more timely basis before too long, because it just drives me crazy when I have to wait so long for my favorite comics!

And speaking of waiting for comics to come out, when is *Darker Image* coming out? Also, how is *Bloodstrike* related to *Youngblood*? Are they going to be featured in an "Extra-Image" like *Shadowhawk* and *Supreme*?

I've heard that a lot more titles will be appearing under the Image logo next year and I can't wait! When will you be able to let us in on the names of these new projects and their artists? Keep up the great work!

Michael Baxter
Seattle, WA

If you've read this far, Michael, then you probably know already that you can find out about all the upcoming Image releases right here in Inside Image. *In fact, our very next issue should tell you everything you need to know about our upcoming* Bloodstrike *series!*

Dear Image,

I've been collecting comics since *X-Force #1* when I was on vacation and stopped to buy some magazines. I saw the first issue of *X-Force* that day and that got me started! I now have all the issues of *X-Force* with Rob Liefeld's art in them, but I have to tell you—*Youngblood* is the most well-drawn group of heroes I've ever seen! I have some questions for you, though...
1) Does Shaft have a string on his bow or is it so fine you can't see it?
2) Is that Deadlock from The Four in Bloodstrike or is he a twin brother?
3) Are Bloodstrike good or evil?
4) What's the deal with the Rob Liefeld Fan Club? Is it a rip-off?

Thanks for your time. I love *Youngblood* and I hope you keep Rob on it much longer than he was on *X-Force*!

Simon Robertson
Moraga, CA

(continued next page)

(continued from previous page)

1) Shaft's bow doesn't have a string, Simon. To find our exactly how it operates, you might want to check out Youngblood: Battlezone #1 which should still be available at your local comics shop.
2) Yes.
3) Bloodstrike are heroes.
4) While the Rob Liefeld Fan Club may not be everybody's cup of tea, it's far from a rip-off. RLFC members receive a bi-monthly newsletter featuring info on upcoming Extreme Studios projects, contests, creator profiles and more. They are also able to purchase merchandise available only through the fan club and are eligible for numerous giveaway items, including buttons, posters and special edition comics.

Dear Image,

I've been collecting comics since I started junior high school and I have every comic you've put out to date. I just wanted to write to say that you guys are doing an absolutely fantastic job! I wasn't old enough to take part in all the cool things that happened during the early days of the Marvel Universe, so I really feel lucky to be here at the beginning of what will one day be the biggest and best comics company ever. I do have one question, though. Who answers the letters in all your comics and how do you decide which ones to print?

Andrew Alvarez
Albany, NY

Good question, Andrew! A variety of people handle the letters columns here at Image. Erik Larsen and Jim Valentino answer the letters for their respective titles, while editor Eric Stephenson answers most of the letters for Youngblood, Brigade and Supreme. It really depends upon the book in question. There's really no set method of choosing letters for publication, but letters raising good questions or making valid points about the various books are much more likely to see print than letters which simply say, "I really liked the latest issue of Spawn."

Dear Image,

Congratulations on your continuing success! After almost a year, Image is still going strong, despite the negative criticism leveled at you by those who were either envious of your good fortune or who simply didn't know better. It just goes to show that the pundits aren't always right, afterall!

As you're preparing to embark on your second year, I was hoping you could answer a couple of questions for me and maybe even fulfill a request. Questions first, though.

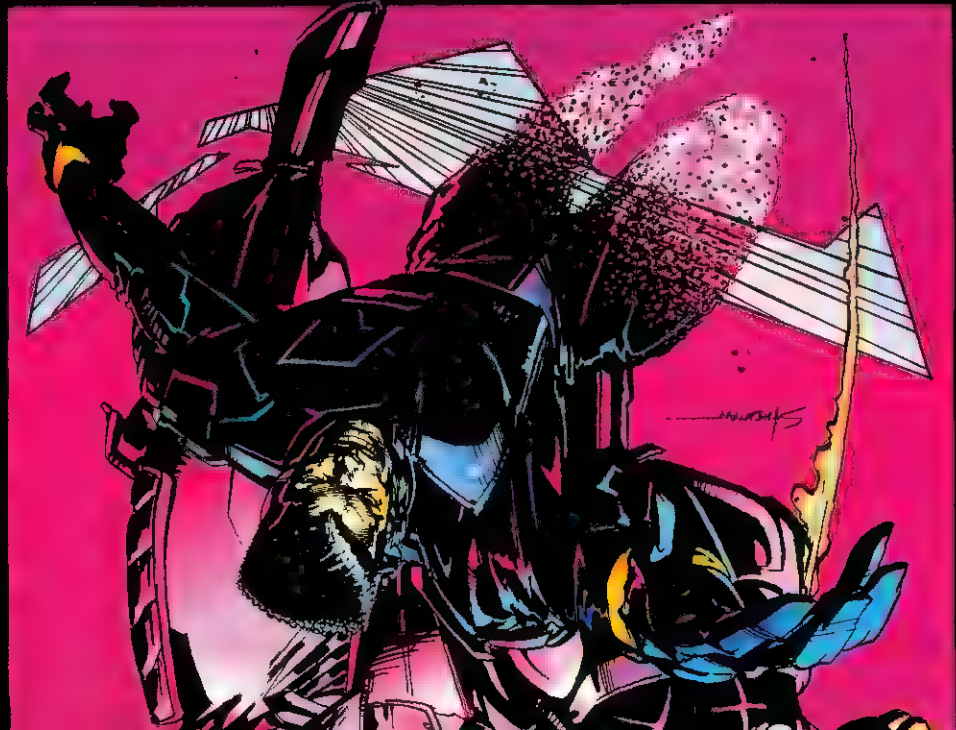
First of all, I've seen references to a "technical assistant" in a number of your comics. What exactly does a technical assistant do? Secondly, whatever happened to the PITT "Extra-Image" that was supposed to appear in *Youngblood*?

And, lastly, there's my request. While I have copies of every issue released through Image so far, I would love it if you would collect the initial mini-series into trade paperback form sometime soon. It would be great to have, say, *Youngblood #'s 0-4* in one volume. Is there any chance my request my become a reality during the next year?

C.J. Brock
Eastlake, OH

You may be in luck, C.J.! There are presently plans to reprint three Image series - Youngblood, The Savage Dragon and Shadowhawk - as trade paperbacks during 1993. We'll keep you posted on release dates. A technical assistant is an artist who has specialized in technical drawing and whose primary job is to assist in penciling and/or inking backgrounds, vehicles, machinery, etc. As for the PITT "Extra-Image," you probably know by now that it appeared, albeit a little late, in Youngblood #4.

JOHNSON
TRIBE
STROMAN



STROMAN
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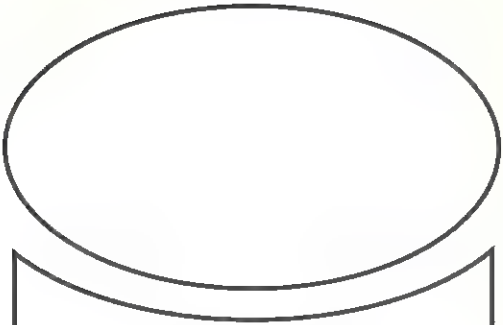


MAXX

YOUNGBLOOD: STRIKE FILE

UNION

RIPCLAW

PROPHET

IMAGES OF SHADOWHAWK

1963

VIOLATOR

BLOODSTRIKE

FREAK FORCE

VANGUARD

image

THE PLACE TO BE IN '93

STORMWATCH #2

$1.95
Cover by Jim Lee

Pencils: Scott Clark
Inks: Trevor Scott/Jim Lee
Plot: Jim Lee/
Brandon Choi
Script: Brandon Choi
Colors: Joe Chiado

There is no rest for the weary as Battalion and his fellow StormWatch members, Diva and Fuji, are hunted by a rogue band of Mercs led by the bloodthirsty Kilgore. He's out to even the score from Sarajevo and avenge the death of Shriek. Unfortunately for Battalion, his family is at the top of Kilgore's deathlist! If that isn't enough, Weatherman One detects a major seismic disturbance in the Soviet Union. The problem is that it's located near a town called Chernobyl! Expect some new introductions to the Image Universe! It's an Omen of things to come.

WILDSTAR #3

$1.95
Color.
By Al Gordon/
Jerry Ordway

Not a hoax. Not a dream. Not an imaginary story. THE DEATH OF WILDSTAR! This is no joke. No trick. No kidding. He really kicks the bucket. Takes a dirt nap. He's meat. Cold duck. A real gonner. RIP!!
No black arm band. No tree buttons. No poly-bag. No gimmick. JUST PLAIN DEAD!
And as if that isn't enough...Enter The Dragon. Boy, we'll tell you about it next issue.

TRIBE #1

$2.50
Color.
By Todd Johnson/
Larry Stroman

TRIBE is the Brooklyn based story of a group of individuals brought together under hostile circumstances. Led by brilliant scientist and entrepeneur Murdock Ellsion (BLINDSPOT), TRIBE's origins are rooted in the treacherous dealings of EUROPAN, a powerful international corporation seeking worldwide influence by cornering the market on breakthrough technology and research. After learning of Europan's ultimate goal, Ellison recruits victims of Europan's treachery to strike back at the deadly corporation. Featuring SHIFT, HANNIBAL, THE FRONT, STEEL PULSE, FLY GIRL, SHORT ORDER and OUT COLD, TRIBE is a fast-paced, action-oriented urban drama involving a web of intrigue surrounding both the formation of the Tribe core and Europan's hidden power base of underworld and political connections.

JOHNSON TRIBE STROMAN

SPAWN #11

$1.95
Color.
Written by Frank Miller/Story & Art by Todd McFarlane
Pull out poster by Geof Darrow

They come by the hundreds and they've got all the guns in the world. All they're after is a rotten patch of cracker pavement and all that's on it are drunks and defamers and losers. But the killers don't get it. These are Spawn's people and this is his HOME.

will give us some glimpses into the Diehard program and the governments first foray into genetic engineering. Other Diehards - the first Diehard, for instance - weren't super-powered He was just an excellent athlete. Also, they haven't all been male, there have been males and females. Some of them have been more bionic or robotic than the current one who's a more of a genetically or chemically altered superbeing. So, you get all that, plus we'll have the Super-Patriot along for the ride. I've talked it over with Erik Larsen, told him what I wanted to do and he'll give me input on anything that's done with Super-Patriot I think this is going to be a fantastic fight, because you've got these two spectacularly powerful characters, one who's clearly on the side of the law and one who's not so sure what's right and wrong anymore because the powers that guide him are on the other side of the fence. It should be a blast

AND HOW ABOUT THE CHAPEL STORY?

I've been pursuing Jae to do something for Image for awhile now, whether it be his own thing or something for us He said he wasn't ready to do his own thing yet, but I kept pursuing him because I thoroughly enjoyed his work on Namor and, eventually, he ended up saying he'd like to do something with the Youngblood characters. I asked which one he'd like to do and he said Chapel, he said he liked the skull on Chapel's face and could do something cool with the skull imagery About a week later, he sent me the first Chapel piece and I called up Todd and told him about this story we wanted to do involving Chapel and Spawn and that would basically be the first chapter in the story of who killed Spawn. Again, this is a story that will be delving into the past, Chapel's early years with the CIA and so on There's a character called Jason Wynn from Spawn who plays an important role in this story and there's Al Simmons and we introduce a character who has been and who will continue to be Youngblood's number one threat, a terrorist named Giger who's got a terrorist group called Cybernet made up Cyborgs. Giger himself was the first product of the Youngblood project, but he's gone horribly wrong and in the Youngblood series he will be their chief arch-nemesis. Whether you're a fan of Spawn, Youngblood or Jae Lee's artwork, you're gonna want to read this story

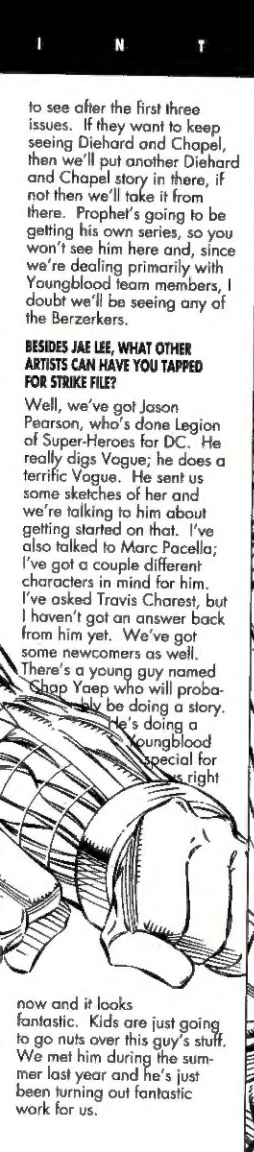
SO WHAT COMES AFTER DIEHARD AND CHAPEL?

I think we'll let the fans decide. In the first few issues, we'll ask them who they want

to see after the first three issues. If they want to keep seeing Diehard and Chapel, then we'll put another Diehard and Chapel story in there, if not then we'll take it from there. Prophet's going to be getting his own series, so you won't see him here and, since we're dealing primarily with Youngblood team members, I doubt we'll be seeing any of the Berzerkers.

BESIDES JAE LEE, WHAT OTHER ARTISTS CAN HAVE YOU TAPPED FOR STRIKE FILE?

Well, we've got Jason Pearson, who's done Legion of Super-Heroes for DC. He really digs Vogue; he does a terrific Vogue. He sent us some sketches of her and we're talking to him about getting started on that. I've also talked to Marc Pacella; I've got a couple different characters in mind for him. I've asked Travis Charest, but I haven't got an answer back from him yet. We've got some newcomers as well. There's a young guy named Chap Yaep who will probably be doing a story. He's doing a Youngblood special for us right now and it looks fantastic. Kids are just going to go nuts over this guy's stuff. We met him during the summer last year and he's just been turning out fantastic work for us.



WELL, IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF THINGS LINED UP FOR STRIKE FILE, SO IS THERE A CHANCE IT WILL EVENTUALLY BECOME A REGULAR SERIES?

We'll see how sales are on the book. You see, as a fan, I never enjoyed spotlight books. For instance, when DC put out the Teen Titans spotlight, I got really excited about that, but when it came out it was a bad Starfire story followed by a bad Jericho story. Really bad stories by artists who were competent, but weren't anybody I'd get excited about. I think Marvel Comics Presents has done the same thing, with a few exceptions. I think they've always been drawn by fill-in guys, but that's not what we're doing here. We've got some of the best artists in the business, whether they're the best young guys or the current hot guys and I think we're trying to set a standard for this comic with the first issue. I think the fact that you've got solid Liefeld/Lee stories in the first three issues sends a definite message that we're committed to making this a quality book. One thing I've always believed about comics is that while it's definitely the characters that sell comic books, it's the creators that make those characters hot. It was so and so's run on Spider-Man, or Punisher, or X-Men that drew attention to these characters, so much so that when they left, fans continued buying those books for another year and a half until they realized it just wasn't exciting anymore. Until another creator comes along to fill that character with all his magic and energy, that character's dull again. A good character in a good creator's hands is an awesome thing. A character without any energy put into it is just lines on paper.

ROB LIEFELD
YOUNGBLOOD: STRIKE FILE

INTERVIEW BY RON RIFE

WHY YOUNGBLOOD:STRIKE FILE?

Since the first issue of Youngblood, we've received an overwhelming amount of mail from readers telling us who their favorite characters are. Among the favorites were Diehard, Bedrock, Shaft, Prophet - who is enormously popular; probably the most popular character outside of Youngblood - and the Berzerkers, who are also immensely popular. To me, Shaft is Youngblood. Although the second issue focused mainly on the away team, the home team stories have focused primarily on Shaft; Shaft kind of walks you through the story. So, basically, Youngblood is where you'll find Shaft all the time and then we try to spotlight the other characters as much as possible. In issue three, for instance, Bedrock and Chapel got the spotlight; there was more given to them in the course of the fight scene. In issue four, there's a lot of Diehard stuff, because we were just overwhelmed with requests for more Diehard. I think he'd appeared in something like two panels in issue one and he's just become phenomenally popular. So, he was an obvious choice to spin off. I didn't think he was ready to handle his own series, but there was obviously a demand for spotlights on solo characters or even combinations of characters. So, when you ask why Youngblood:Strike File, it's because, from what we've seen, there's a demand for this.

SO, WHAT DO YOU HAVE LINED UP FOR THE FIRST ISSUE?

For the first issue, I'm doing a Diehard story featuring a character from the Savage Dragon called the Super Patriot and then there's a Chapel story which ties in with Spawn and a story that Todd (McFarlane) and I came up with. That's going to be illustrated by Jae Lee, who's ultra red-hot and from what we've seen so far, the stuff kicks. We're really excited to have him here at Image. As with Youngblood, this will be a flip-book and one side of will focus on Chapel, the other on Diehard. I've always liked flip books because I feel you're giving the kids something more than just a cover and an ad slapped on the back.

COULD YOU GIVE US A LITTLE BACKGROUND ON WHAT YOU'VE GOT IN STORE FOR DIEHARD?

Well, basically, Diehard is America's super-weapon. There have been a number of Diehard's throughout history, dating back to the first world war. The story in Youngblood:Strikfile #'s 1-3 finds Diehard coming into contact with Super-Patriot, who is now a product of Cyberdata. If you read the Savage Dragon, which I hope you do, you know that since his death in Savage Dragon #1, he's been reworked into this super-cyborg. During this story, we'll learn that Super-Patriot actually fought alongside a Diehard model during World War II, but this is not the same Diehard. Super-Patriot senses some familiarity, but Diehard won't realize it until the end of the story. There will be flashbacks of the W.W.II Diehard and Super-Patriot...it's two stories in one; you'll be getting the past and how these guys once fought alongside one another and the present kind of brings their pasts together or vice versa. So the Diehard story is basically hinting at some history behind the characters, plus it

FEEL THE BLOOD...
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APRIL 93
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INSIDE
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MARCH 1993
ISSUE #1
Miller and McFarlane Do Spawn!